

Ridgefield Christian to participate in Arkansas LEARNS Educational Freedom Accounts

Jonesboro, AR: The Ridgefield Christian School Board of Directors has approved the school's participation in the Educational Freedom Account (EFA) program established last year by the LEARNS Act. The board previously held off on participating due to concerns over civil rights language in the application. Further conversation with other school leaders, staff at the Arkansas Department of Education, and Rep. Keith Brooks, the bill's main author and a strong advocate for religious freedoms in Christian schools, provided more clarity and details about that language. The board believes our concerns have been satisfied.

We remain committed to upholding our religious freedom and biblical convictions regarding marriage and gender issues while appreciating the financial benefits that a parental choice program such as LEARNS makes available. We applaud Gov. Sanders' ["commitment to school choice and the need to strengthen both public and private education sectors to achieve the best results for students."](#)

Education Freedom Accounts (which are from local and state tax dollars and not federal money) provide Arkansas parents with funding equal to 90% of the State's prior year per-student allocation. For the 2023-2024 school year, this was **\$6,600 per student**. These funds can be used to pay for private school tuition at participating schools. The following groups of students are eligible to participate in EFAs for the upcoming 2024-2025 school year:

- Students enrolling in kindergarten for the first time
- Children of active-duty military personnel
- Children whose parents are veterans or in the military reserves
- Children of law enforcement officers or first responders
- Students who were enrolled the previous school year in a F-rated or D-rated public school
- Students with a diagnosed disability identified under IDEA
- Students who are considered homeless
- A foster child or a former foster child
- Students who received EFA funds in 2023-24

EFAs become universal for all Arkansas families in the 2025-26 school year. We encourage eligible RCS families to apply for EFA funding: <https://efas.ade.arkansas.gov>. We will provide more information and update our website as details become available for the next school year.

Maintaining the mission and ethos of Ridgefield Christian School remains our top priority. While we are cautiously optimistic about the value of the EFA program, as the school's governing body, we will evaluate our participation each year to ensure that we can remain faithful to our identity as a Christian school in doing so.

RCS Board of Directors
Dr. Matt Hill, Chair
Dr. Bryan Easley, Head of School